

REMARKS

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7-16 and 18-23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 5,897,386 to Baxter et al. in view of United States Patent No. 4,978,313 to Kameyama et al. As Applicant has cancelled claims 1-5, 7-16 and 18-23 in this Amendment, Applicant considers this rejection moot.

In view of the Examiner's rejection, though, Applicant has added new claims 24-29 in this Amendment. Claim 24 is independent with claims 25-29 being dependent thereon. Applicant is of the opinion that claims 24-29 are not anticipated by Baxter et al., nor are claims 24-29 obvious in view of the combination of Baxter et al. and Kameyama et al., because these prior art references do not recite each and every element set forth in independent claim 24 either alone or in combination.

New independent claim 24 requires a housing structure having first and second end portions and an elongated body portion provided therebetween, where the first and second end portions have a consistent width along the predetermined length, with the first end portion also having a first recessed area accessible from the front mating surface and a second recessed area accessible from the front mating surface. The elongated body portion also has a consistent width along the predetermined length, but the width of the elongated body portion is less than the width of the first and second end portions. The elongated body portion also includes wall means extending between the mating faces for defining at least one terminal-receiving passage between the faces, with the wall means being of a generally uniform thickness between the faces along the predetermined length of the elongated body portion.

Baxter et al. alone, or when combined with Kameyama et al., clearly does not teach or suggest such a structure. Baxter et al. appears to disclose a housing (10) having a section (48) which defines at least one terminal-receiving passage, a section (50) which defines a recessed area, and a section (52) which defines a recessed area. In order for the housing (10) of Baxter et al. to show or disclose each of the limitations of independent claim 24, we must assume that the recessed areas of the section (50) and the section (52) are a part of a first end portion of the housing (10) and that the section (48) is in the elongated body portion of the housing (10), which is positioned between the first and second end portions of the housing (10). As such, it is clear that Baxter et al. does not teach or suggest the structure as defined by independent claim 24 for at least the following reasons:

1. The first end portion (where the section (50) and the section (52) are provided) does not have a consistent width along the predetermined length. It is clear from FIGURES 3 and 4 of Baxter et al. that the first end portion has a first

width where the gripper arms (56) are provided, and a second width (which is smaller than the first width) where the gripper arms (56) are not provided.

Thus, the first end portion of Baxter et al. does not have a consistent width along the predetermined length;

2. The second end portion (which must be defined as the gripper arm (56) to the left of the section (48) when FIGURE 4 is viewed) has a consistent width along the predetermined length, but the width of the second end portion cannot be generally equivalent to the consistent width of the first end portion because, as explained above in 1., the first end portion does not have a consistent width along the predetermined length, but rather has two different widths at different spots along the predetermined length;
3. The elongated body portion does not have a consistent width along a predetermined length as the gripper arms (56) (proximate to the second end portion and proximate to the section (50)) are clearly positioned below the section (48) such that the elongated body portion has at least two different widths along the predetermined length, rather than only the one consistent width as claimed. Thus, the elongated body portion of Baxter et al. does not have a consistent width along the predetermined length; and
4. The elongated body portion does not have a consistent width along the predetermined length which is less than the consistent width along the predetermined lengths of the first and second end portions. As explained above in 1. and 3., this clearly is not shown as the first end portion and the elongated body portion have more than one width along the lengths thereof. Thus, Baxter et al. does not disclose or suggest having an elongated body portion having a consistent width along the predetermined length which is less than a consistent width of the first and second end portions along the predetermined lengths.

As such, Baxter et al. cannot be said to disclose or suggest each of the limitations of new independent claim 24, such that Baxter et al. does not anticipate new independent claim 24. “A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claims is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.” *Verdegall Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of Calif.*, 814 F.2d 628, 631 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

The Examiner cited Kameyama et al. in combination with Baxter et al. to reject the claims of the application because, in the Examiner’s opinion, Kameyama et al. discloses that

which Baxter et al. doesn't disclose, namely, wall means for defining a plurality of terminal-receiving passages, with each of the terminal-receiving passages having only one of the plurality of conductive terminals mounted therein. Thus, the addition of the disclosure of Kameyama et al. to the disclosure of Baxter et al. does nothing to change any of the foregoing differences (1. - 4.) between the invention claimed in claim 24 and that disclosed in Baxter et al. such that the combination of Baxter et al. with Kameyama et al. does not render obvious the invention claimed in claim 24.

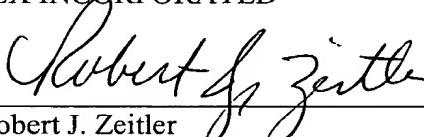
Thus, Applicant respectfully requests consideration and allowance of new independent claim 24 as the prior art references of record do not alone render this claim anticipated, or in combination render this claim obvious. As Applicant is of the opinion that independent claim 24 is in condition for allowance, Applicant respectfully requests consideration and allowance of dependent claims 25-29.

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conversation will facilitate the prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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